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# PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

## OF

# ANCIENT SCULPTURE IN ROME.

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THOUGH there exist many important works, general as well as special, on ancient sculpture, its history has yet to be written. In saying this we do not imply any disparagement of the efforts of Winckelmann, K. O. Müller, Brunn, Overbeck, Friedrichs, Ross, or of the many other faithful workers who have helped us to an understanding of the spirit of ancient art. We merely mean, that hitherto it has been impossible to bring together and arrange the materials necessary for a complete history. Many of these materials are still unknown to us, being buried deep under the soil of Greece and the countries which she colonized, or, in matters of taste, conquered; others have been but recently recovered, and these, though sufficient to show us ~~that~~ much of what we believed to be established on a scientific basis must now be withdrawn, have ~~not~~ enabled us to fill up with certainty the blanks thereby left. To feel how true this is, we have only to ~~run~~ over the catalogue of works discovered within the last decade in Cyprus and the Troad, at Mykenai, Spata, Acharnai, Olympia, Dodona, Athens, etc., works which, as a celebrated archæologist recently said, "haben die ganze Geschichte der antiken Kunst wieder in Fluss gebracht." And, doubtless, when Sardis, and the cities of Lykia, Rhodes, and Crete, when Orchomenos, Delphi, and Tegea, shall have yielded up their treasures, we shall be even more deeply convinced than we now are of our past ignorance and the consequent falseness of our theories.

But besides the works that still lie buried under the soil, and those that have been too recently discovered to have found their proper place in the history of art, there is a third, and by no means unimportant, class of works which have not yet received the attention they deserve, and which, nevertheless, when the time comes for writing that history, will materially aid in supplying connecting links and throwing light upon dark passages. These are the works scattered about in the smaller private collections of Europe and America, the contents of many of which are still entirely unknown to science. While the works existing in the great public museums and galleries, as well as in the more extensive private collections, have, for the most part, been placed within the reach of the historian of ancient art through descriptions, engravings, photographs, casts, etc., there are in small collections others of no less value, which, for all the use they are to science, might as well be still reposing in the embrace of the protecting earth. As might be expected, these small collections are especially numerous in Turkey, Greece, and Italy. In regard to those in the first of these countries, if country it may be called, our ignorance is wellnigh complete. There are collections in Constantinople, Smyrna, Salonika, etc., of which Europeans know little more than the existence, if even so much. In Greece, the case is somewhat different; for the Greeks, with generous national pride, have done

all they could to make their treasures known to the world with that accuracy which characterizes their archæological work, and recently the German Archæological Institute of Athens, through its *Mittheilungen*, has given several excellent *catalogues raisonnés* of private and other collections, and will no doubt give many more. Nevertheless, the private collections of Greece are far from being thoroughly known. In Italy, much has been done, partly through the private efforts of Italians and others, and still more by the *Institut für Archæologische Correspondenz*, through its different publications. Still, there are even now, in Rome and other large cities, not a few small collections, containing unpublished works of considerable importance for the history of art. For the most part, indeed, these works cannot claim great intrinsic merit; but, on the other hand, they often have an extrinsic value which renders them highly deserving of study. Many years ago, Gerhard, in one of his most instructive essays, insisted upon the fact, which in itself is sufficiently apparent, that there were in existence many small and poor copies of famous works of sculpture (such as that of the Parthenos of Pheidias, the Stroganoff Apollo, etc.), and that these were capable of rendering great service in enabling us correctly to restore the mutilated originals, or superior copies of them. It is chiefly because the less known private collections contain many works having this value that it may not be unimportant to give an account of some of those existing in Rome.

#### I.—THE JERICHAU COLLECTION.

This collection, by no means the least remarkable, was begun about thirty-five years ago, and is now to be seen at Mr. Jerichau's studio, in the Palazzo Lovatti. It numbers something over two hundred pieces, which are not all of equal, or even of great importance, many of them being mere fragments, whose character and meaning it would be impossible to determine; but there are some twenty among them that well deserve to be described. Mr. Jerichau, whose own well-known merits as a sculptor, and whose acquaintance with the spirit and *technique* of Greek art are such as to leave no doubt respecting his ability to distinguish genuine products of Greek art from later and inferior ones, never lost an opportunity of adding to his collection whatever he could find that had a value either intrinsic or extrinsic. In this way he gathered together numerous reliefs, statues, statuettes, and other things, of which the following are the most important.

RELIEFS.—1. *Relief from the Asklepieion at Athens* (Fig. 1), of Pentelic marble; height, 0.71 m.; length, 0.91 m.; thickness, 0.07 m.—This, the finest piece in the collection, was brought from Athens some forty years ago, and no one familiar with the numerous votive tablets found in 1877 and 1878, on the site of the Asklepieion, will have to be told that it originally belonged to that temple.<sup>1</sup> It differs, indeed, considerably from all the others, both in grouping and in motive; but as it is in a good state of preservation, with the exception that there is a fragment broken off from the left-hand side, there can be no difficulty in identifying the personages, however much there may be in interpreting their action. In the middle of the group, on a rock, sits Asklepios, a splendid figure, easily recognizable by his typical head, his attitude, and his drapery. His left hand rests upon the rock, while his right holds a club entwined by a serpent. Behind him stand Athena, with helmet, long spear, ægis, and Gorgoneion, and Hermes, easily distinguishable by his *caduceus* and winged *petasos*. Before him stands his daughter, Hygieia, attired in the full diploidion, which falls in rich folds to her feet. In her right hand she holds a patera, while with her left she seizes the serpent of Asklepios and tries to make it drink from this vessel. Her hair is bound in a knot behind her head, which is bowed. Following Hygieia, and laying her hand upon her robe, comes another figure, seemingly a female in the attire of a huntress, but so mutilated that its sex cannot be easily

<sup>1</sup> See F. von Duhn, *Votivreliefs an Asklepios und Hygieia*, in *Mittheilungen des deutschen archæologischen Institutes zu Athen*, Vol. II. pp. 214-222, and Plates XIV.-XVII.

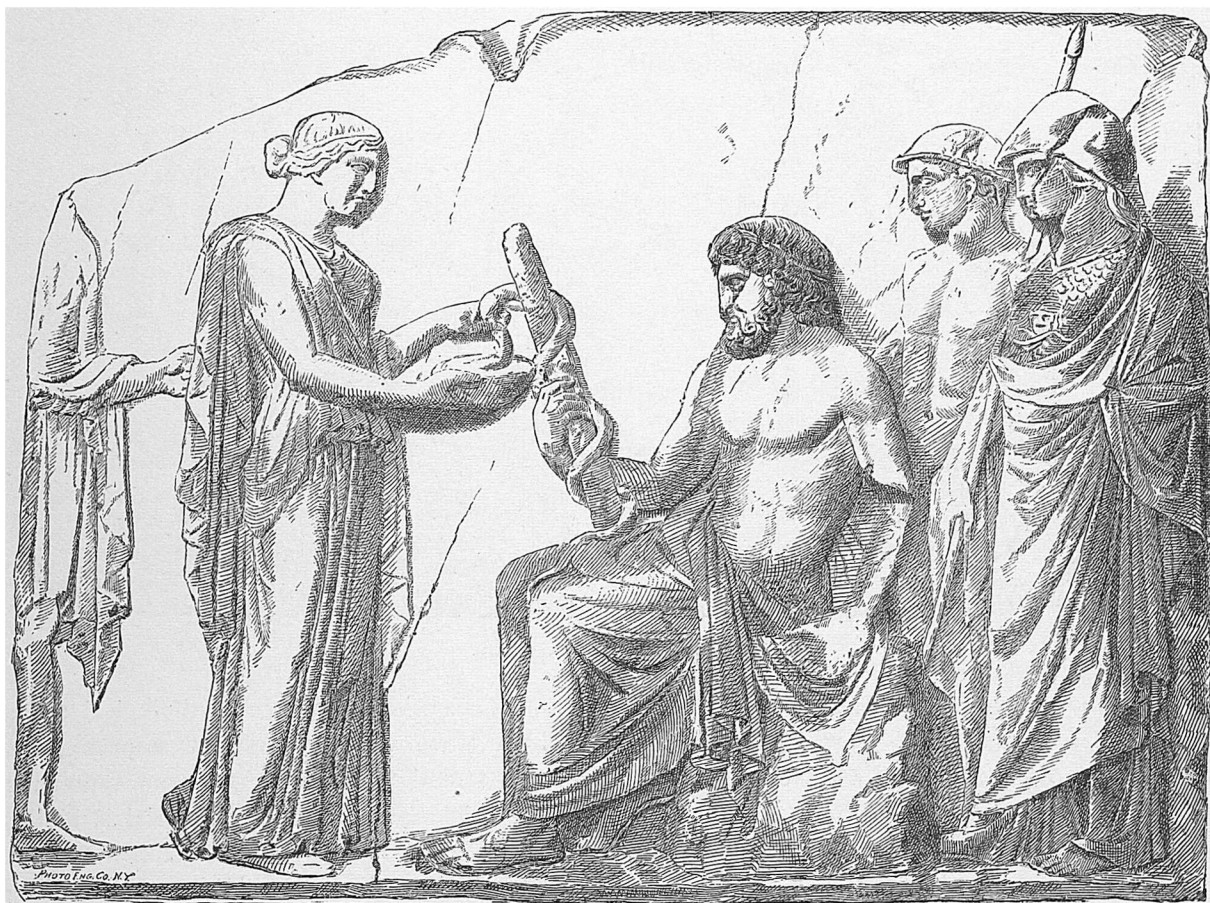


Fig. 1.—RELIEF FROM THE ASKLEPIEION AT ATHENS.

recognized. A female figure similar to this, and in much the same attitude, occurs on several of the Asklepion tablets. Her name has not yet been determined with certainty. The figures of the group are all in profile, and in facial type closely resemble each other. The work is correct, and of a high order; the figures are full of grace and dignity; the style is free from mannerism, as well as the false idealism of the Lysippian and subsequent schools, and the whole spirit is significant and solemn. All these characteristics go to prove that the work belongs to one of the two great periods of Athenian art, and perhaps to the first, or Periklean, rather than to the second. Indeed, it reminds me in the most forcible way of the frieze of the Parthenon. The heads of the standing figures are all in a line, and reach nearly to the top of the slab; but there is a vacant space about the head of Asklepios, as was indeed unavoidable if he was to be represented sitting in the company of other gods who were standing. It is worth noticing, however, that Asklepios is larger than the standing deities, although the difference in height is not as great as that between the standing and sitting figures in the Parthenon frieze.

In a general way the meaning of the group may be made out. The tablet was undoubtedly presented by some distinguished person in gratitude for recovery from a severe illness. The scene is laid in the temple of Asklepios. A suppliant has entered to present his prayer for health, and Athene in person, as the gracious guardian of the Athenians, and Hermes, as the messenger of Zeus, come to request that the prayer may be heard. Asklepios accordingly raises his club, and allows the entwining serpent to drink out of the cup presented by Hygieia, who, it would seem, held the same intercessory position among the Greeks that the Blessed Virgin now holds among Roman Catholics. In other words, Asklepios accepts the suppliant's offering, and will grant his prayer. It is not necessary to dwell on the meaning of the serpent symbol, or on the simple unity that pervades this beautiful group.



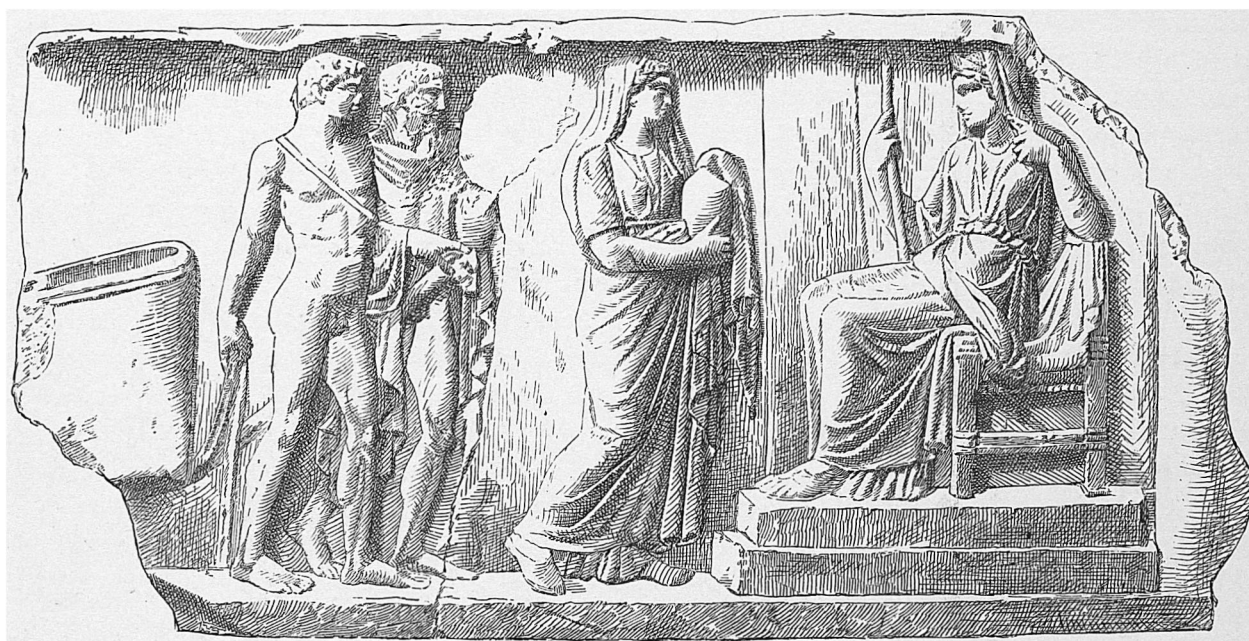


Fig. 2. — KLEOBIS AND BITON.

2. *Relief representing Kleobis and Biton* (Fig. 2).—This curious piece of mythological genre was found at Ostia, and is sufficiently well preserved to leave us in no doubt respecting its subject and meaning. A few inches from the left-hand side and the upper right-hand corner are broken off. Its present length is 1.10 m.; height, 0.57; thickness, 0.06. The material is bluish, apparently Hymettian marble. To the right of the relief sits Hera, throned in her temple. This temple is symbolized by two columns, one behind and the other to the right of the statue, and perhaps also by the two steps of the platform upon which the throne stands, although we should have expected three steps rather than two. The goddess holds in her raised right hand a sceptre, while with her left she lifts the veil that falls in folds from her head, somewhat in the same way as does the Hera of the Parthenon frieze. The elbow of her left arm rests upon the low back of her throne. Her head is adorned with a crown, or rather an antyx (ἄντυξ), similar to that we are familiar with in the Ludovisi Hera. Before the steps of the throne, but still in the attitude of walking, is the priestess, a tall, matronly figure, full of grace and dignity, in robes almost exactly similar to those of the goddess, but without the ἄντυξ, and bearing in her hands an amphora without handles. A short distance behind her come her two dutiful sons, still dragging the chariot in which they have brought their mother to the temple. They appear to differ considerably in age, but are both types of manly beauty, notwithstanding that they bear a very remarkable resemblance in feature to their mother. It is, indeed, curious to see how slight changes would be required to make the younger son's head an exact copy of the mother's. Both are almost nude, having each only a mantle, which, in the case of the elder, passes over the shoulders and falls from the left arm, while in that of the younger it simply hangs on the arm. Each has a hand on the pole of the chariot, (only that of the younger is seen, however,) which is decorated with a ram's head; the younger seems, moreover, to be pulling the vehicle by cords or straps fastened to the lower end of the pole. Part of the chariot, including the wheels, is broken off, but what remains shows the double ἄντυξ, such as Homer refers to in *Iliad*, V. 728:—

δοιαὶ δὲ περίδρομοι ἄντυγές εἰσιν.

Whether the work be an original or a copy, and I see no good reason to doubt that it is the former, there can be little question that it belongs to the school of Polykleitos. It was probably intended to decorate the Heraion near Mykenai, the temple in which the incident

represented was said to have taken place. The story of Kleobis and Biton (Herodotos, I. 31) is too well known to need repetition. It may, however, be noted that Pausanias mentions having seen at Argos a relief group with the same subject, evidently differing, however, in respect to the moment selected. It stood close to a statue of Zeus Meilichios, by Polykleitos, and is thus described: "Near by are Kleobis and Biton carved on stone. They are represented drawing the chariot containing their mother into the Heraion." But the figures as well as the subject point to the Argive school. The youths are just such as Polykleitos was fond of representing, and indeed the younger forcibly recalls the copies of the celebrated *Kanon* or *Doryphoros*. We know, moreover, that Polykleitos executed the famous chryselephantine statue for the Heraion near Mykenai. Indeed, the Hera in our group may give us some hints as to the attitude of that work, although it cannot be regarded as a copy, inasmuch as the left hand, instead of holding a pomegranate, raises the veil which falls from the head. In this one respect, as already remarked, she reminds us of the Hera of the Parthenon frieze. In any case, the relief belongs to a good period, and is one of the best specimens of mythological genre we possess.

3. *Relief representing a Wedding Scene.*—This fragment, which is nearly square, the height and length being each 0.40 m. and the thickness 0.05 m., seems to be part of a somewhat longer relief. It is, however, complete in itself. A handsome youth, with the upper part of his body undraped, leaning on his left arm, half rises from a couch, at the foot of which sits a woman in the full robes and veil of a bride. His right hand, which is raised to the height of his head, holds a *pytón*, or drinking-horn, and he is evidently pledging his bride before emptying it at one draught, as was the custom. The attitude of the bride, whose face is partly concealed from him by the veil, only half withdrawn, is modest and timid. She listens, indeed, with appropriate guarded courtesy to the pledge; but a maidenly sense of timidity is clearly indicated by the position she has assumed. Before the couch stands a small marble table, supported on three curved and decorated legs, and bearing viands. Near it stands a small boy or page, in the short, sleeved tunic of a slave. He seems to be aware of the importance of the occasion, for his attitude is extremely demure and expectantly reverential. At the head of the couch there is a tree, round whose trunk is twined a serpent. This serpent is devouring a round cake, which lies on the pillow close to the bridegroom's left arm. This, no doubt, is intended to indicate that the powers of health and fertility have accepted the offerings of the happy couple, and are prepared to bless their nuptial couch.



Fig. 3.—WEDDING SCENE.

Small and seemingly unimportant as this fragment is, it is nevertheless a real work of art, full of fine feeling, delightful artistic motives, and the purest human emotion, expressed with warmth and yet with dignity. It is a bold thing for an artist to attempt to depict the supreme moment in the domestic existence of a man and a woman,—the moment which crowns the hopes and longings of all their past youthful life, and lays the foundation of the happiness or unhappiness of their riper future. It must be admitted, however, that he has been eminently successful. There is hardly an element wanting that goes to make a perfect marriage. The beauty and modesty of the bride, the manly bearing of the bridegroom, to whom, as Goethe says, boldness has now become a duty, the richness of the couch and table, the respect of the attendant, and, finally, the favor and blessing of the gods, are all expressed with a unity and warmth that could hardly have been surpassed even in a large work. To any one who wishes to feel the inner and purer side of ancient life, with its manliness and modesty, its dignity and its piety, this little fragment offers material for long and profound study.

4. *Fragment of a Mithras Group* (Fig. 4), (0.75 m.  $\times$  0.55  $\times$  0.09).—In manner of treatment this work reminds us of the *Apotheosis of Homer*, and probably belongs to the same period. In both, the true nature of the relief is forgotten, and, instead of an ideal background, we have a real one, with an attempt at perspective. Mithras reliefs are by no means uncommon, but this one presents some peculiar features. In a cave in the mountains, represented by an overhanging rock, stands a youth in Phrygian attire, with his feet crossed, his head leaning slightly to the left side, and in his hands a long torch, which leans toward the left, and part of whose flame is seen above his head. Before him, on the ground, lies an ox, of which one cloven foot and part of the tail are all that remain, but which is doubtless the ox we are so familiar with in numerous groups, known as *The Sacrifice of Mithras*, in the Vatican, British Museum, and elsewhere. At the other side of the cave stood a second torch-bearer, with his torch leaning in the opposite direction. Over the mountains rises the sun in full splendor, preceded by Lucifer, a part of whose torch is visible near the head of the god.<sup>1</sup> For literature of Mithras myth, see K. O. Müller, *Handbuch*, page 671.



Fig. 4. — FRAGMENT OF A MITHRAS GROUP.

THOMAS DAVIDSON.

<sup>1</sup> Respecting the restoration of this relief there can be no doubt except on minor points. There is another closely resembling it in the Torlonia Museum, No. 190 of the catalogue, in which it is thus described: "The god is represented in the middle of the composition in the act of slaying a bull, which lies under him. The serpent and the dog lick the blood which flows from the wound. On the two sides are the two

attendants of Mithras, the one with his torch raised, the other with his torch inverted. In the background of the sacred cave is the head of the Sun surrounded with rays, and near him are Pegasus, the raven, and another winged creature. . . . Underneath is the inscription: (Soli) INVICTO. MITHRAE. FECIT. AURELIUS. SEVERUS. TRIBUNUS MILITUM. ITIO. MARCELLINO PATRE."—In the year 1785 there were found near Rome, in a grotto outside the Porta Portese, by the bank of the Tiber, two fine statues, one of which, now in the Vatican (No. 435 of the official catalogue of the *Museo Pio-Clementino*, cf. Visconti, *Museo Pio-Clem.*, Vol. III. No. 21), closely resembles the torch-bearer of our fragment, while the other, now in Germany, differs from it only in having the torch turned in the opposite direction. The former was falsely restored as a Paris, with an apple in his right hand. There can be no doubt that the two formed part of a mystical group which occupied the Tiber grotto, and whose middle portion was the piece known as *The Sacrifice of Mithras*, already referred to. We know that Mithras was worshipped, not in temples, but in caves or grottos, and that his rites were of a mystical kind, somewhat gross indeed in form, but capable of profound interpretation. It is curious that it contained the idea of vicarious sacrifice for sin. The Emperor Commodus is said to have caused human victims to be sacrificed to Mithras, and Tertullian is probably not far wrong when he speaks of the rite, of which this was but too literal a rendering, as *mimus martyrii*. [See the curious note on the connection of this with college "hazing," in Lobeck's *Aglaophamus*, p. 1262 seq.] It is worth noting, moreover, that in early Christian art the Magi, who came to Bethlehem at Christ's birth, guided by a star, the symbol of Mithras, are represented in Phrygian attire. An ancient writer speaks of Mithras as "locorum nupticorum illuminatorem."

(Conclusion in next number.)

